



### Asking for your help on Pledge of Allegiance issue

It is only July and the next regular legislative session is six months away, but I am already making plans on a number of subjects.

However, one issue has gained considerable nationwide attention, and I am strongly considering addressing it here in Indiana. The issue involves the recent court ruling which bans the Pledge of Allegiance from being recited in schools because it contains the words "one nation under God."

At first glance, it is easy to think that there is nothing we could do, but I'm not so sure that is the case.

I am reminded of a bill I introduced two years ago that would allow for the posting of the Ten Commandments in our schools and government buildings. Upon introduction of my bill, I believed it to be a simple piece of legislation that would draw little, if any, attention.

The bill passed, and to my surprise, gained a tremendous amount of nationwide media coverage, because Indiana was the first state to pass a Ten Commandment bill.

By enacting such a law, we were able to start a nationwide movement, thus schools and governmental buildings throughout America now have the Ten Commandments posted.

If we were able to start such a nationwide movement once before right here in southern Indiana, perhaps we could do it again. I realize it is a longshot, but I'm thinking it is worth trying. It would take a lot of my time to promote the issue, because like the Ten Commandments, there will be strong opposition.

**I NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU. DO YOU WANT ME TO PURSUE THE "ONE NATION UNDER GOD" ISSUE, OR IS IT JUST NOT WORTH THE EFFORT? PLEASE CONTACT ME WITH YOUR OPINION. BOTH MY MAILING AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES CAN BE FOUND ON THE BACK OF THIS NEWSLETTER.**

As I prepare for the next session, I hope that you will keep me informed of the issues that are most important to your family. I look forward to hearing from you.

## Special session ends

### Denbo cannot support tax increases; votes "no"



Dear Friend:

The 2002 Special Session recently ended, and the state news has been dominated by the passage of House Bill 1001. (It was the only bill considered during the special session.)

However, I must tell you that I voted "no" and that I continue to have very serious reservations about the legislation.

The product of the special session was a piece of legislation that failed to address the concerns that are important to us in District 62. I did not oppose every element of the bill, but overall, it was simply bad for us in this part of southern Indiana.

First of all, I hate to see tax increases, and House Bill 1001 contained several. I have always promised you that I would oppose all tax increases unless they were "absolutely" necessary. Here at the capitol, it is highly debatable as to whether or not such increases were indeed necessary.

Perhaps more importantly, I strongly believe any increase in taxes should be fair to the people of Greene, Lawrence, Martin, Orange and Washington Counties. I voted "no" because it was obvious that House Bill 1001 provided significant tax relief to the big corporations at the expense of homeowners, family farmers and other "common people." For example, one reliable report claimed that individuals' tax burdens would "increase" approximately \$713 million while big businesses' tax burdens would be cut by \$725 million.

Furthermore, I am not convinced that raising the sales tax is the right thing to do, especially in these tight economic times. There were also a couple of other tax increases that were of concern to me: one being the gasoline tax increase, which only sends one cent per gallon back to our local counties and towns, with the state keeping the rest. Secondly, the 258 percent increase in cigarette tax was of concern, because I don't like to see any segment of people—no matter what the common bond may be—hit with such a huge increase all at once.

As you know, I have always fought for real property tax relief, and I was hoping House Bill 1001 would truly provide such, but I just don't see it happening. In addition, I firmly believe that the bill will not solve the state's current fiscal crisis, and that we will continue to see cuts in education, services to seniors, law enforcement and other vital areas. All things considered, the bill seemed more of a "Band-Aid approach" than a sound, long-term solution.

One thing was certain about the bill: a majority of legislators actually opposed it. Unfortunately, there are some "strong influences" here at the capitol, and in the end, the "Indianapolis clique" obtained the votes needed to pass the bill.

Another issue that dominated the media during the special session was casino gaming, and I need to mention the subject. It must have seemed that this issue was all that we really worked on, and nothing could be farther from reality. It was just one segment of the bill, though it gained a lot of attention. I did think it was extremely unfair that our top legislative leaders thought it was appropriate to allow for expansion of gaming by allowing riverboat casinos to go dockside, yet they refused to permit a simple transfer of a license from Patoka Lake to West Baden/FrenchLick. Once again, the big corporations won while the common people lost out.

It is with regret that I write such an update as has been written. During my career, I have traditionally been able to report good news in most of my past newsletters and wish I could in this one. However, I know that you want me to continue fighting for our concerns. But, sometimes our concerns get bogged down by politics and special interest groups, and I just can't go with that "politics as usual" when that happens.

I do want to thank all of you who contacted me during the special session with your suggestions and ideas. As always, you, the people, determine how I vote on the issues, and you were a major help this time!

Please keep contact, and please remember to keep our state and nation in your prayers.

May God be with you,

# Free publications available from Representative Jerry Denbo

The following publications are available free-of-charge by calling my Statehouse office at 1-800-382-9842.

**Hoosier Fun and Facts** — This information and activity book teaches elementary students about their state through text, puzzles and other activities.

**Relax...** — This booklet for senior citizens discusses issues from taxes to health problems to leisure activities.

**Higher Education** — A publication for those interested in pursuing a higher education degree, detailing many Indiana colleges and universities as well as occupational and vocational schools.

**Guide to State Agencies** — This booklet details various agencies within Indiana state government, listing phone numbers, functions and general areas of responsibility for each.

**Discount Drug Cards** — This information sheet details several discount cards available to seniors for their prescription medications.

## *Also Available:*

- The Festival Guide
- Get Out and Go Map
- Golf & Travel Guide
- Indiana Department of Transportation Road Map
- The Indiana Travel Guide



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